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SPECIAL ARTICLES

Read Right: Do Different Students Require Different Reading Interventions?

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By Rhonda Stone - ReadRight Systems
www.readright.com
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It isn't supposed to be possible. No reading program is supposed to be effective with all kinds of students.

A variety of elementary educators from Texas, Washington, and Idaho strongly disagree. They have implemented a single reading intervention and found it to be highly effective with all of these types of students: regular education students, special education students, English language learners, Title I students, and students diagnosed with dyslexia, ADD, and/or Down syndrome. The following comes directly from educators:

In Forestburg, Texas:

Four years ago, nearly 20 percent of Forestburg's enrollment of 165 students qualified for special education services. When they brought Read Right to the school, they opted to place all 30 of their elementary, middle, and high school special ed students in the program, along with an additional 30 regular education students who scored the poorest in reading. The results surprised Superintendent Fonda Huneycutt (Ph.D. in education). "Read Right tutoring really works for children we simply didn't know how to help before," she says. "Most of our students have graduated out of the Read Right tutoring program, even the special education students. Their reading problems are gone, and their comprehension of what they read is excellent," she says. "This year we reached our goal of mainstreaming all of our special education students."

One particular student typifies why Huneycutt is so satisfied with the program. The boy was in the fifth grade

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when he started Read Right. "He had been served in special ed in our school every year since the second grade in four out of the five basic academic areas," she says. "Today he no longer receives special education services and is on the A-B honor roll. He is so excited. He carries his report card in his pocket so that he can share it with people." Huneycutt credits the elimination of the boy's reading problem for his transformation, and she has no doubt it was Read Right that eliminated it. The school doesn't use any other reading intervention.

Forestburg's success is beginning to attract positive attention. Forestburg's enrollment increased this year by an impressive 21 percent as parents from surrounding districts transferred their children to the school. "Schools really need to look at this," Huneycutt says of the program. "This isn't like anything we'd ever tried before."

In Raymond Washington:

Newly trained Read Right tutors at Raymond Elementary School use the word "amazed" when they talk about the program. They started their training in Read Right small-group tutoring on September 19, 2005. By November 21, many of their 8- and 9-year-old non-readers were reading first and second grade material efficiently.

Gayle Haerling is the Raymond program's certified teacher. She taught kindergarten through sixth grades for 24 years before switching to Title I reading last year. "Read Right is so different," she says. "It doesn't teach reading as individual letters or individual words. It teaches reading as all about the ideas an author is trying to communicate. Kids don't think about reading as ideas. They think of it as a group of sounds or individual words."

Deb Mehring is a classroom aide who has been working with reading for the past 14 years. "The kids are enjoying different aspects of this," she says. Before, they were focused on individual words. "Now, if they get part way into a sentence and if it doesn't make sense, they'll stop to figure out why. They know that something isn't clicking. They understand that words have to go together and make sense. Now, it's the ideas that matter."

Raymond Elementary School Principal Joan Leach is an enthusiastic supporter of what's happening in her school's Read Right program. "Parents are coming to me and saying



'This is working for my child.' Classroom teachers have told me that some of the kids who were the poorest readers at the beginning of the school year are already beginning to volunteer to read in class, and they're doing well. It's remarkable. It really is working for all kinds of kids."



In Boise, Idaho:

Janice Leenhouts was chairman of the special education department at her junior high school and had been a special education teacher for about 20 years when she was asked by her district to train to become a tutor in the district's brand new Read Right® program. That was seven years ago. Today, Leenhouts is a Read Right Trainer for the Boise School District. "Read Right works," Leenhouts says. "It doesn't get any simpler than that."



Every summer, Boise offers Read Right small group tutoring (one tutor to four students) to elementary students in grades 4-6, with preference given to students who do not reach established proficiency standards in reading. For the past four years, summer school students consistently have made nearly one full year of gain (.92) in reading ability in just six weeks, as measured by the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement fluency subtest.



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Today, four elementary schools and two additional junior highs in Boise have Read Right programs. During the 2004-2005 school year, a total of 99 Boise students, including 37 special education students, took different forms of the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test before and after tutoring. The average NCE gain of the 99 Boise students tutored with Read Right was 11.5. (An NCE gain of 1.9 to 3.2 is considered by researchers to be "meaningful.") Their average grade equivalency gain was 1.3, and their median national percentile ranking increased from 10 to 24.



Advocate
for Texas
public education

Janice Leenhouts enthusiastically welcomes inquiries about Boise's Read Right program.

What's Different about Read Right?

The Read Right approach is causing a bit of a stir in the reading field. Read Right's founder, Dee Tadlock, Ph.D., was nominated this year for the International Brock Prize in Education by Melinda Reeves, the State of Texas's Secondary School Principal of the Year in 2004 and principal of Decatur High School, Decatur, Texas. For the



past two years, 100 percent of Decatur's eligible graduating seniors have passed the state's tough high school language arts/reading exam. A former reading specialist, Reeves credits Tadlock with Decatur's reading success and for developing ideas that are revolutionary in the field of reading. The methodology has even benefited Decatur students diagnosed with dyslexia, ADD, and Down syndrome.

"Neither teachers nor students are to blame for low reading scores," Tadlock says. "Reading theory has been flawed for decades and the flaws historically have made it elusive to fix reading problems systematically. A growing body of scientific evidence now shows that individual word recognition and sentence reading are separate cognitive events in the brain, requiring different patterns of neural activation. The majority of the reading field is focused on 'fixing' problems with individual word recognition. Read Right creates the right environment for students to address problems with sentence reading. It's that simple."

Interested in learning more?

Consider attending the presentation by Paula Dugger, Pre K-8 Reading Coordinator, Irving ISD, at the upcoming TASA Midwinter Conference in Austin. Her presentation, "Successful Reading Intervention, All Students Can Learn to Read," will be based on the Irving experience in implementing Read Right tutoring in all Irving elementary schools and five middle schools. Austin Convention Center, Jan 30, 9:45-10:45am, Room 11.

Or visit : www.readright.com

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